



Everything a Developer needs to know
about locating in the City of Hillsdale.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

CITY OF HILLSDALE, MICHIGAN

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Why Hillsdale?

Established in 1835 and chartered in 1869, the City of Hillsdale is located in the rolling, fertile hills of South Central Michigan, bordering Indiana and Ohio. A community of approximately 8,000 residents, it is the county seat of Hillsdale County and home to nationally-recognized Hillsdale College as well as Jackson College. Hillsdale is also home to Hillsdale Hospital, a private, independent, non-profit institution and the only acute care hospital in Hillsdale County.

The City of Hillsdale and its business community has strong ties to its manufacturing and agricultural roots. Hillsdale has a quiet, small-town lifestyle, but is a close commute to larger metropolitan areas including Lansing, Coldwater, Jackson, Battle Creek, and Ann Arbor, Michigan, Fort Wayne, Indiana and Toledo, Ohio. I-69 and I-80 can both be reached in 30 minutes or less and I-94 is just 45 minutes away.

The city-owned Hillsdale Municipal Airport can handle commercial air traffic with a recently upgraded 5,000' x 100' runway. Other nearby airports include: Lansing Capital City Airport, Detroit Metro-Wayne County Airport, and Ft. Wayne International Airport.

Everything you need to make your business venture successful is available here: buildable land and available buildings; a skilled workforce; reliable and economical utilities; entrepreneurial, educational and workforce development resources.

Working in partnership with local and regional economic development and government agencies, our economic development support system is designed to be responsive to the needs of existing and new businesses and entrepreneurs.

About the Development Guide

This guide provides a general overview of the City of Hillsdale development approval process. It is meant to help residents, developers, investors, and others understand the review and approval process for any size project from concept through occupancy. Consultation with staff and/or outside professionals is recommended for most projects. You can also learn more online at www.cityofhillsdale.org.

Target Industries

Hillsdale offers businesses an ideal location to start or grow their business. We have everything you need: an excellent, skilled workforce, existing infrastructure, available land and buildings, local and state incentives, first-class utilities, access to local financing, and both educational and workforce development resources.

Target Industries

The City of Hillsdale has identified the following as industries for business attraction:

- Advanced Manufacturing
 - Food Processing
 - Livestock Processing
 - Hydroponic Greenhouse Operations
 - High Tech Manufacturing
 - Electrical Equipment and Component Manufacturing
 - Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing
 - Other Transportation Equipment Manufacturing
- Call Centers
- Remote Co-working Spaces
- Data Centers
- Leisure and Hospitality
- Education and Health Services

Hillsdale Manufacturing and Technology Park

Situated in the northwest corner of the City of Hillsdale, adjacent to state highway M-99, the 360-acre Hillsdale Manufacturing and Technology Park provides light industrial, manufacturing, and technology related businesses the space and services they need to succeed.

- 170 acres of vacant, buildable land, free of environmental contaminants
- Asking price: \$5,000/acre
- Flexible terms on land purchases
- 135 acres with Technology Overlay
- 72 strands of high-speed fiber-optic network with triple redundancy available for commercial traffic
- Municipally owned and operated electric, water, and wastewater treatment with competitive rates
- Paved all-weather roads
- Uniform building requirements
- 24/7 Police & fire protection
- Centrally located: Close to highways and other urban centers
- Accessible raw material sources
- Local public transportation for employees



The Hillsdale Workforce Development and Technology Center is located in the heart of the Manufacturing and Technology Park. The center is operated by the Hillsdale County Intermediate School District and provides educational and vocational training programs meeting the needs of today's workforce.

A detailed map of the park is located on the following page in landscape layout.



Hillsdale Municipal Airport

The Hillsdale Municipal Airport is a State of Michigan licensed "Public Use-General Utility Airport". The runway was recently reconstructed and expanded to 5000 feet by 100 feet. The crowned and grooved construction offers superior drainage for excellent braking/steering characteristics and the weight bearing capacity rating has been increased up to the "Gulfstream" category of business aircraft. Future development includes a new terminal building/parking area, hangars, fuel farm and full length taxiway.

The airport is accessed via two instrument approaches (VOR, GPS) with an additional two WAAS based GPS approaches. These approaches will significantly improve access and safety during inclement weather conditions. Weather conditions at the airport are continuously monitored and broadcast by AWOS-3 automated weather observation station. Flight crews have access to weather data via the WSI Weather Brief station in the Terminal/FBO building.

Full-time staffing at the airport ensures timely and continuous daytime runway monitoring and clearing during the winter season. On-call runway clearing services are available for night/early morning departure and arrivals via the Fixed Based Operator (FBO).

The Terminal Building offers a heated and air-conditioned public waiting area, conference room and pilot lounge. There are vending machines, complimentary coffee and water service and free public Wi-Fi service through the FBO. The Terminal also contains a Gift Shop which carries souvenirs and routinely used pilot supplies.

Twenty-four hour self-serve fuel is available. Full-service fuel is available through the FBO during daytime hours seven days a week and available upon request after hours. Products include Jet-A fuel and 100LL Avgas. Rental cars are available locally with airport pick-up/drop-off via the Fixed Based Operator. Flight crews also have a free courtesy vehicle available.

Hangar facilities are available on a space/size limited basis as are heated storage facilities for larger aircraft through the FBO. Aircraft maintenance, car rental and aircraft management services are available through the FBO Monday through Friday daytime hours. On-call service available weekends and evenings as well. Property may be acquired for non-aviation businesses as well as for private and corporate hangar construction.

For more information please contact Ginger Moore, Airport Administrator at: (517) 797-4833, Hillsdale_Airport@cityofhillsdale.org

Key Staff

City Manager's Office

David Mackie, City Manager	517-437-6444	dmackie@cityofhillsdale.org
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Human Resources

Laura Sergent, Human Resource Director	517-437-6443	lsergent@cityofhillsdale.org
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Planning, Assessing, & Code Enforcement

Alan Beeker, Zoning Administrator	517-437-6449	abeeker@cityofhillsdale.org
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Kim Thomas, Assessor & Code Enforcement	517-437-6456	kthomas@cityofhillsdale.org
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Olivia Jones, Appraiser, MCAO	517-437-6455	assessor@cityofhillsdale.org
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City Clerk's Office

Katy B. Price, City Clerk	517-437-6441	kprice@cityofhillsdale.org
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Peter Merritt, Treasurer	517-437-6454	treasurer@cityofhillsdale.org
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Economic Development

Kelly LoPresto	517-437-6426	econdev@cityofhillsdale.org
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Hillsdale Board of Public Utilities

Chris McArthur, Director	517-437-3387	cmcarthur@hillsdalebpu.com
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Chad Culbert & Eric Sheffer, Electric Distribution	517-437-6417	electricdistribution@hillsdalebpu.com
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Bill Briggs, Water & Wastewater	517-437-3387	bbriggs@hillsdalebpu.com
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Fire Department

Scott Hephner, Fire Chief	517-437-6451	shephner@cityofhillsdale.org
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Police Department

Scott Hephner, Police Chief

517-437-
6460

shephner@cityofhillsdale.org

Public Services

Jake Hammel, Director

517-437-
6490

jhammel@cityofhillsdale.org

Outside Agencies

Additional agencies may hold jurisdiction on particular development issues within the City of Hillsdale depending on the project. The following list includes the most commonly involved outside agencies.

Hillsdale County Building Department

Martin Taylor, Building Inspector (517) 437-4130 m.taylor@co.hillsdale.mi.us

Hillsdale County Road Commission

Mike Parney, Chairman (517) 474-1380 parneys@sbcglobal.net

Hillsdale County Drain Commissioner

Matt Word, Commissioner (517) 437-4181 drains@co.hillsdale.mi.us

Michigan Department of Transportation

Doug Jordan, Engineer (517) 780-5103 jordanr@michigan.gov

MISS DIG

(800) 482-7171

Economic Development Partnership

Susan Smith, Executive Director (517) 260-2544 ssmith@hillsdaleedp.org

Boards & Commissions

Most development applications are considered by the Planning Commission. Other boards or commissions may become involved in your application if appeals, variances, rezoning, ordinance amendments, or incentives are involved. Staff can direct you to the appropriate boards for your particular case.

City Council

Meets 1st and 3rd Mondays

Staff Liaison: Katy Price

Planning Commission

Meets 3rd Wednesday

Staff Liaison: Alan Beeker

Zoning Board of Appeals

Meets 2nd Wednesday, as needed

Staff Liaison: Alan Beeker

Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA)

Meets 3rd Tuesday of odd months

Staff Liaison: Alan Beeker

Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

Meets 3rd Thursday of even months

Staff Liaison: Kelly LoPresto

Master Plan

The City updates its Master Plan every five years. The most recent update was adopted in 2021. The Planning Commission uses the opportunity to look into the future. Public participation is encouraged and public meetings are held during the update process to find out what the people of Hillsdale would like as the focus of that vision. You can view the current Master Plan on our website, or contact the City Zoning Administrator for a copy.

Planning and Zoning

The zoning ordinance regulates the use and development of land within the City of Hillsdale. Standards are in place that apply both citywide and in each specific zoning district. You are encouraged to review the zoning ordinance and consult with staff before initiating any change of use or construction project within the City. You can view the Hillsdale Municipal Code of Ordinances at www.municode.com or contact the City Zoning Administrator.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission for the City of Hillsdale is a seven member board. Their duties include review of site plans for potential building projects, regulation of land use, zoning ordinance adoption and amendment, re-zoning requests, preparation of a Master Plan, Capital Improvement Plan and review of capital projects. **They meet regularly on the third Wednesday of every month at 5:30 pm at City Hall.**

Site Plan petitions are required for submission of review by the Planning Commission. There are application fees for site plan review and the applications are included in this guide.

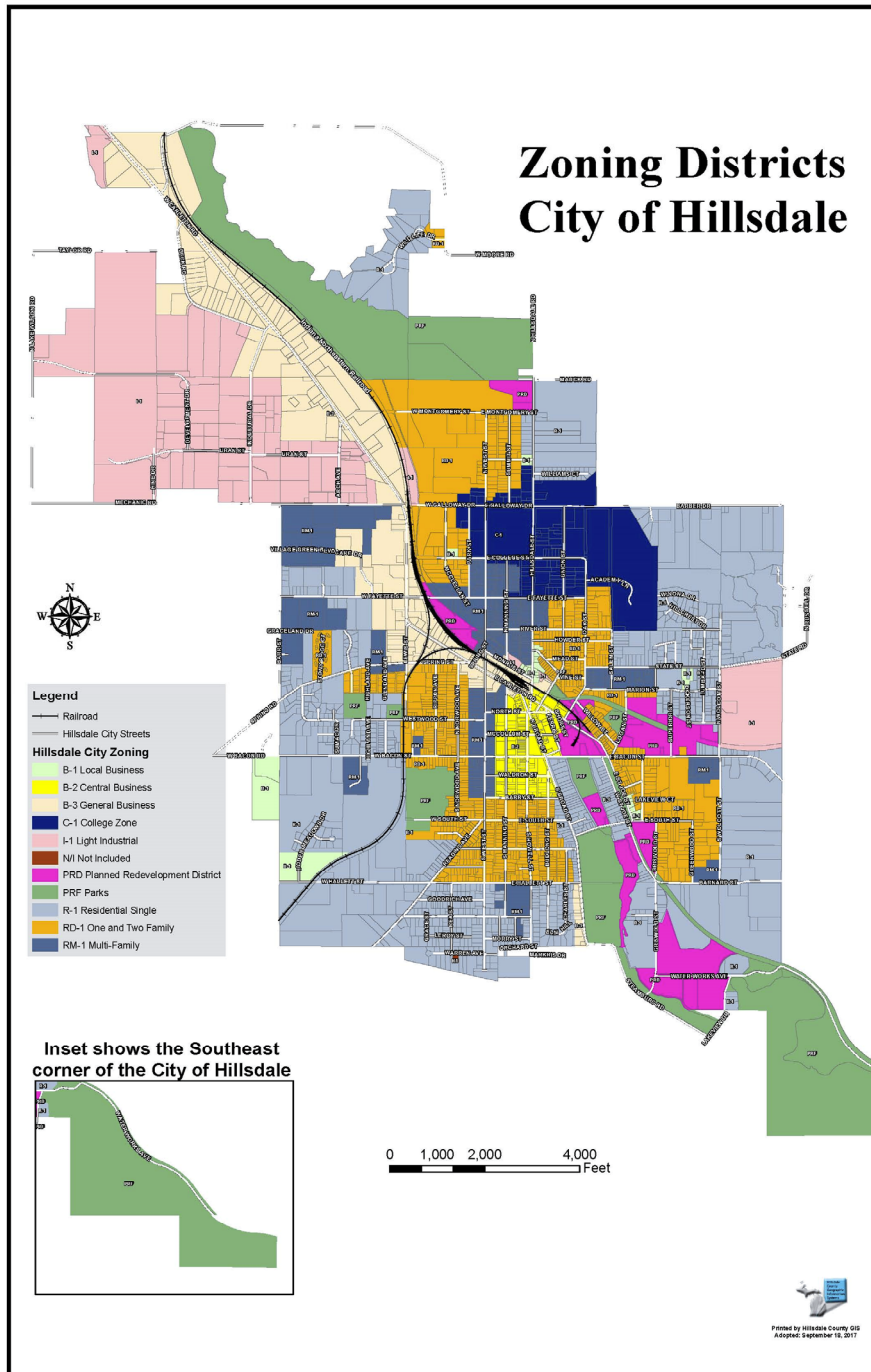
Re-zoning Applications must be initiated by property owners or by the Planning Commission. Requests for re-zoning must be submitted 21 days prior to the regular meeting to insure compliance with notification requirements. There is a \$500.00 filing fee and must be submitted with the application. Recent zoning amendments are included in this guide.

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals is a seven member board. **They meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm in the Council Chambers of City Hall as needed.** Their duties include review of Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission decision appeals, non-conforming alterations, variance requests, temporary structure placement and requests for variance from the zoning or sign ordinances.

An application to the Zoning Board of Appeals must be accompanied with a filing fee of \$300.00. They must meet within 30 days of the request to hear the appeal.

Zoning Ordinance Map



Board of Public Utilities – Information and Rates

Board of Public Utilities

The mission of the BPU is to meet or exceed customer needs and expectations for reliable, economic, and environmentally responsible public utility services that merit being the supplier of choice. The Board of Public Utilities provides reliable electric, water, and wastewater services to the City of Hillsdale. For additional information, please go to <http://www.hillsdalebpu.com>

Electric Utility Rates

Residential: <https://www.cityofhillsdale.org/bpu/page/residential-rates>

Commercial: <https://www.cityofhillsdale.org/bpu/page/non-residential-rates>

Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) rate can vary month to month. A base amount (cost) for energy is in our rates, however if the actual cost to provide you with energy is higher or lower, that difference must be passed on. The major items that will affect the price of power is overall customer demand and the cost of fuel.

Energy Optimization charge is a program that was mandated by the State of Michigan and is charged based on the rate type. Those funds are used to provide programs, rebates and education that encourage energy efficiency among our customers.

Operation Roundup – this program rounds up the monthly bill to the next whole dollar. The amount collected is used to assist BPU customers that meet strict criteria established by the Community Action Agency and the Hillsdale BPU.

Water & Sewer Rates

<https://www.cityofhillsdale.org/bpu/page/water-and-sewer-rates>

All Rates subject to change. Contact BPU at (517) 437-6410 to confirm utility rates.

Incentives

A variety of development incentives may be available for your project. The City has a tax increment financing authority (TIFA) and other opportunities to help make your project a reality.

TIFA BUSINESS ATTRACTION PROGRAMS

\$10,000 TIFA Business Attraction Grant:

- Funds are available for retail business, ground floor preferred; no professional services
- Must occupy a building in the TIFA district
- Requires business plan approval, based on acceptable, solid **3 year** business plan
- Up to \$10,000 for façade improvements; **1:1 match** required
- Requires a three year lease or three year business commitment
- Redundant businesses discouraged, Extended operating hours preferred
- Up to \$10,000 for non-removable, **interior** building improvements; **no match required**
- Renovation plan must be reviewed and approved by TIFA

\$ 25,000 TIFA Restaurants Attraction Grant:

- Properties must be located within the City of Hillsdale TIFA district
- Restaurant must be open for dinner
- Requires business plan approval based on an acceptable, solid **5 year** business plan
- Requires a five year lease or business commitment
- Up to \$25,000 in a **1:1 match** directed toward a major building renovation
- TIFA monies must be spent on code related building improvements
- Matching funds must be spent on **interior** building improvements
- Renovation must be reviewed and approved by the TIFA

\$10,000 TIFA Façade Grant Program

- Funds are available for commercial or mixed use properties within the TIFA district
- Available to new and current building owners; Tax exempt properties are not eligible
- Up to \$10,000 for façade improvements; **1:1 match** required
- A maximum of \$2,000 may be used for signage
- Funds may be spent on any non-removable, exterior building improvements such as painting, masonry, pointing, windows, signage, lighting fixtures and other façade renovations
- Completed application with material samples must be reviewed and approved by TIFA

\$10,000 Business Expansion Program

- Funds are available for the physical expansion of any business
- Funds are available for expansion of existing building capacity (i.e. Fire suppression system)
- Must occupy a building anywhere in the TIFA district
- Up to \$10,000 for façade improvements; **1:1 match** required

- Building may be leased or owed by the business
- Available to current building owners
- Retail businesses preferred
- Requires business plan approval based on an acceptable three year business plan
- Requires a three year lease or business commitment
- All buildings would also be eligible for the \$10,000 façade grant
- No work performed prior to TIFA approval may be included in the project application

10,000 Historic Building Grant

- Funds are available for building owner in the TIFA district
- Funds are available for special projects relating to historic building improvement
- Funds are available for historic preservation
- Up to \$10,000 for façade improvements; **1:1 match** required
- Funds are available for asbestos and lead abatement
- May not be used for building maintenance projects
- Tax exempt properties are not eligible
- All buildings would also be eligible for \$10,000 façade grant
- No work prior to TIFA approval may be included in the project application

For more information please contact Alan Beeker at (517) 437-6449

TAX ABATEMENTS/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Property Tax Abatements

Contact the City Assessor's office for maps of designated districts and more information about the City's application and approval process. A determination and statement of obsolescence is required from the Assessor for all rehabilitation projects. You can also find application forms and general information regarding these and other Michigan business incentives at www.michigan.gov/propertytaxexemptions and at www.michiganbusiness.org

- **Industrial Facilities (IFT or IFE)**. Council established an Industrial Development District in 1975 over the Manufacturing & Technology Park to promote new development in that area for manufacturing and technology. Since that time, additional Plant Rehabilitation and Industrial Development Districts have been established throughout the City over current and historical industrial use properties. Contact the City Manager's office for a list of vacant properties in the manufacturing & technology park owned by the City of Hillsdale Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and available for purchase.
- **Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ)**. The City of Hillsdale currently has three established districts eligible for the Neighborhood Enterprise Zone property tax abatement on residential new construction or qualified rehabilitation projects.
 - **Three Meadows Subdivision**. This is a new housing development located off West Hallett Street at the western edge of the City limits. The development project was started in 2000 by Miller Diversified, Inc, of Maumee, Ohio. The remaining unsold lots were deeded to EDC in 2006, and the NEZ was established over this district in 2007 to help facilitate completion of the project. Contact the City Manager's office for a list of vacant lots still available for purchase.
 - New and expanding business within the City may purchase a lot at Three Meadows Subdivision for \$1.00. Construction of the new residence must begin within one year of purchase. This offer is transferrable.
 - **Part of Blackmar & Beebe's Addition to the Village (now City) of Hillsdale**. The designated zone is bordered on the north by College Street, on the west by Park Street, on the south by Fayette Street and on the east by the north-south alley between Manning and Hillsdale Streets. This neighborhood redevelopment has been spearheaded by Hillsdale College. Contact the College Administration office for information on vacant properties available for purchase for new construction. Rehabilitation of existing residences may also qualify within this district.
 - **Part of the Original Plat of the Village (now City) of Hillsdale**. This is an area of privately owned historic houses located along North West Street with the north border being M-99 (also known as Carleton Road) and the south border being North Street on the east side and Westwood Street on the west side. Both rehabilitation and new construction projects qualify within this district.
- **Obsolete Property Rehabilitation (OPRA)**. Council established an OPRA district in 2013 over the Central Business District to encourage rehabilitation of the obsolete historic buildings in this area.
- **Commercial Rehabilitation (CRA or CRE)**. The City established four CRE districts in 2009 to encourage rehabilitation of commercial buildings over 15 years old outside of the Central Business District, especially along M-99.
- **Brownfield Redevelopment**
- **Water Pollution Control**
- **Air Pollution Control**

Other Economic Development Incentives

- **Federal Historic Tax Credits**. Hillsdale's historic Central Business District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, making some rehabilitation projects within the district eligible for tax credits. Contact the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for more information.
- **City of Hillsdale Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA)**. Established in 1985 over the Central Business District, the TIFA captures a portion of the property taxes paid by property owners within the district and spends that money within the district for infrastructure and economic development projects. TIFA has recently established multiple grant and forgivable loan programs to help attract and sustain viable businesses within the district. For more information on available programs, contact the Zoning Office at City Hall.

Land Use Applications

This section is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of each type of land use application. This overview does not preempt or supersede any regulations contained within the City of Hillsdale Zoning Ordinance.

Most land use applications are circulated to other reviewers outside of Planning and Zoning for comment.

The table below demonstrates the role of the various review entities regarding the approval of the various Planning/Zoning Applications outlined in this document.

	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Approval</i>			
	Planning Commission	Planning Commission	City Council	Zoning Board of Appeals	Administrative
Site Plan		X			X
Special Use Permit		X			
Rezoning / Conditional Rezoning	X		X		
Text Change / Ordinance	X		X		
Zoning Compliance					X
Variance				X	
Appeal				X	

Zoning Compliance

A zoning compliance permit from the City of Hillsdale may be required prior to the issuance of a building permit by the Hillsdale County Inspection Department.

Permits are also required in the City of Hillsdale for the placement of fencing (including replacement of existing fencing), and placing temporary signs or the placing/re-facing of permanent signs. Zoning/Sign permit fees vary dependent upon project. For related fees, see the City Fee Schedule on the following page.

The County Inspection Department is responsible for the administration of all construction, plumbing, electrical, mechanical and soil erosion permits. The County Inspection Department is located in the Courthouse Annex at on the corner of McCollum and Broad Streets, 517-437-4130.

Right of way permits may be required for any use or construction within or for access utilizing the right of way. To find out if this permit is required for your project, please call the Department of Public Services at 517-437-6490.

For permits or applications, please contact the Zoning Administrator at 517-437-6449.

Zoning Amendments

Zoning divides land into categories according to their use and sets regulations for these categories. When a property owner wants to use land in a way that is not permitted by the zoning of the property, the owner must request to rezone the property to a classification which permits the desired use. A rezoning is a legislative process that will amend the zoning map and/or text of the zoning ordinance. The City Commission (with recommendation from the Planning Commission) has the authority to approve or deny rezoning requests.

The City Council may, of its own motion, or upon petition by the owner(s) of a property proposed for rezoning, prepare an ordinance amending or changing the district boundaries or the district regulations.

Links

Municode Link:

https://www.municode.com/library/mi/hillsdale/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COORHIMI

Tax Exemptions link:

TIFA info:

<http://www.cityofhillsdale.org/tifa-district.aspx>

Commercial Site Plan Review Procedure:

- Submit Commercial Site Plan Review Application with drawings to the Zoning Administrator.
- Zoning Administrator will schedule a review meeting with the Project Owner, Project Architect/Engineer and relevant Department Heads.
- Site Plans, with any revisions required from Department Head review, are to be submitted no later than one week prior to Planning Commission meeting.
- Final Site Plan submittal is included in Planning Commission packet.
- Planning Commission will review and vote to grant or deny zoning approval.
- Upon approval, Zoning Administrator will issue a Zoning Permit.
- Upon denial, Owner may submit an Appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeal.

Zoning Board of Appeal Procedure:

- Submit Appeal Application to the Zoning Administrator no less than 18 days before the second Wednesday of the month.
- Zoning Administrator will review the appeal and schedule a ZBA meeting.
- Property owners within a 300 foot radius of the appeal property will be notified of the appeal no less than 15 days nor more than 21 days prior to the ZBA meeting.
- Public notification will be published in the local newspaper and made available at City Hall and Library.
- Zoning Board of Appeal will review and vote to grant or deny appeal.
- Upon approval, Zoning Administrator will issue a Zoning Permit.
- Upon denial, Owner may submit an Appeal to the Circuit Court.

Property Rezoning Procedure:

- Submit Property Rezoning Application to the Zoning Administrator.
- Zoning Administrator will review application to verify new zoning will coincide with new property use and with City Master Plan goals and will make recommendation to Planning Commission.
- Planning Commission will review request and vote to deny or recommend to City Council.
- Upon approval, Zoning Administrator will begin process to send to City Council.
- Upon denial, Owner may submit an Appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeal.
- Upon approval, Property owners within a 300 foot radius of the property will be notified of the rezoning no less than 15 days nor more than 21 days prior to the City Council meeting.
- Upon approval, Public notification will be published in the local newspaper and made available at City Hall and Library.
- Public hearing will be held before City Council prior to Council vote.
- City Council will vote to approve or deny rezoning.
- Upon approval, Zoning Administrator will publish the zoning map ordinance change.
- Upon denial, Owner may submit an Appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeal.



Developers' Guide to Incorporating Effective Citizen Participation

The Importance of Citizen Participation:

Developers are encouraged to notify citizens and neighborhood groups of proposed developments in their community early on in the development review process. For large projects it is recommended that the developer facilitate and host a citizen participation meeting where developers introduce the project to the community.

Strategies for Effective Citizen Participation Meetings

Citizen participation efforts provide excellent opportunities for developers to introduce their project to the community, answer questions, build trust, learn about success stories and project issues in the area, and alleviate concerns before the project reaches a public hearing. If led effectively, citizen participation can establish collaborative working relationships between developers and residents that last throughout the development review process. To ensure that your citizen participation efforts are successful, follow these guidelines:

- Reach out to neighborhood groups, downtown TIFA, and other interested parties and organizations to introduce yourself, gather public contacts, learn about the community and understand their concerns.
- Create a social media project page and/or website that utilize tools for public comment and feedback.
- Maintain and post various documents related to the project including fact sheets, event timelines, status updates, schedule for public events, frequently asked questions and other significant project activities.
- Email & mail announcements to area businesses, neighborhood associations, TIFA, and interested parties list.
- Explain how the proposed development will be reviewed by Staff, Planning Commission, and City Council, emphasizing the additional opportunities for public input.
- Make meetings and explanations brief and to the point, and then provide ample time to listen to residents' comments, questions, and concerns.
- Provide a variety of visuals such as maps, plan view, drawings, computer-generated images, and elevations to help residents better understand the proposed development. Visuals can be displayed on posters, a PowerPoint presentation, or handouts. Handouts should include basic information about the project as well as your contact information.

To facilitate this outreach, the City of Hillsdale will assist developers with the following:

- Coordination of initial meetings with neighborhood representatives, TIFA representatives, City department heads, Chamber of Commerce, etc.;
- Coordination of presentations before City Council, Boards, Neighborhood Associations, Chamber, etc.;
- The creation and provision of fact sheets, FAQs, timelines, contact information, etc., to keep the community informed and;
- Creation of municipal web links, dependent on the size and scope of project, with all pertinent project information available to the public.